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AUTHOR Obiakor, Festus; Algozzine, Bob; Thurlow, Martha; Gwalla-Ogisi, Nomsa; Enwefa, Stephen; Enwefa, Regina; McIntosh, Angela

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ABSTRACT

This monograph addresses issues associated with the disproportionate representation of culturally diverse students in special education for students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD). Chapter 1 considers identification, assessment, and intervention strategies for culturally diverse students with E/BD. Chapter 2 discusses the impact of high-stakes testing, including: the context of high stakes testing and education reform; consequences enacted in response to test performance; the greatest challenge of high-stakes testing (not knowing the tests' potential biases and effects); and meeting the needs of culturally diverse students. The third chapter explains culturally responsive behavior intervention planning using functional behavioral assessment. It examines assumptions and beliefs about this approach; conditions for the use of functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans; and hypothesizing about behavioral function. Chapter 4 addresses the importance of parent/teacher partnerships in screening and assessment. The final chapter is on interconnecting assessments and interventions and discusses making eligibility decisions, improving instruction and intervention, and assessing culturally diverse students with EBD. (Contains 102 references.) (DB)

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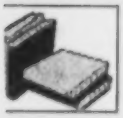

From the Fourth CCBD Mini-Library Series: Addressing the Diverse Needs of Children and Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Programs That Work

Addressing the Issue of Disproportionate Representation

Identification and Assessment of Culturally Diverse Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

Festus Obiakor
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Martha Ehurlow
Nomsa Gwalla-Ogisi
Stephen Enwefa
Regina Enwefa
Angela McIntosh

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Identification and Assessment of Culturally Diverse Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

Festus Obiakor
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Bob Algozzine
University of North Carolina-Charlotte

Martha Hurlow
University of Minnesota-Minneapolis

Norma Cavallaro Ogasi
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Stephen Ukpo
Tuskegee State University

Regina Ukpo
Tuskegee State University

Angela McIntosh
San Diego State University

Lyndal M. Bullock & Robert A. Gable, *Series Editors*

Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

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About the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

CCBD is an international and professional organization committed to promoting and facilitating the education and general welfare of children and youth with behavioral and emotional disorders. CCBD, whose members include educators, parents, mental health personnel, and a variety of other professionals, actively pursues quality educational services and program alternatives for persons with behavioral disorders, advocates for the needs of such children and youth, emphasizes research and professional growth as vehicles for better understanding behavioral disorders, and provides professional support for persons who are involved with and serve children and youth with behavioral disorders.

In advocating for the professionals in the field of behavioral disorders, CCBD (a division of The Council for Exceptional Children) endorses the Standards for Professional Practice and Code of Ethics adopted by the Delegate Assembly of The Council for Exceptional Children in 1983.

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Foreword

In schools across the country, we are witnessing significant demographic changes in the student population. Data show that there is an increasing number of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in both general and special education. The long-standing debate over what is special about special education has been rekindled as school personnel struggle to ensure that a heterogeneous population of students receives high-quality instruction. The challenges are many and varied. Concerns about misidentification may have surpassed those of underidentification—especially when we simultaneously look at the numbers that relate to diversity and disability. Diversity is an issue not only in regard to overrepresentation and underrepresentation of students in various disability groups, but also in regard to the delivery of high-quality instruction. There are those who would argue that a limited body of empirical research poorly informs current teacher preparation and classroom practices. Others assert that students who are variously labeled as *emotionally disturbed, behaviorally handicapped,* or *emotionally or behaviorally disordered* are especially susceptible to inappropriate placement and ineffective practices. It is difficult to refute these assertions.

Most education professionals recognize that we must view these challenges as opportunities as well. We must forthrightly address the complex issues surrounding cultural competency, parent involvement in education, high-quality academic and nonacademic intervention, and the judicious use of emergent technology. We also recognize that we cannot afford to ignore the special challenges of serving students with emotional or behavioral disorders placed in

interim alternative educational settings or correctional facilities. Rapidly changing social, philosophical, political, and economic forces compel us to examine current policies and practices critically and to repudiate any that do not serve all our students well.

The following books comprise the Fourth CCBD Mini-Library Series: Addressing the Diverse Needs of Children and Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Programs That Work, which derived from the 2001 international conference sponsored by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders:

- *Addressing the Issue of Disproportionate Representation: Identification and Assessment of Culturally Diverse Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders* by Festus Obiakor, Bob Algozzine, Martha Thurlow, Nomsa Gwalla-Ogisi, Stephen Enwefa, Regina Enwefa, and Angela McIntosh
- *The Challenges of Gangs and Youth Violence in the Schools* by Sharon H. Grant and Richard Van Acker
- *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners with Behavioral Disorders* by Gwendolyn Cartledge, Kai Yung (Brian) Tam, Scott A. Loe, Antoinette H. Miranda, Michael Charles Lambert, Cathy D. Kea, and Evette Simmons-Reed
- *Dealing with Behaviors Perceived as Unacceptable in Schools: The Interim Alternative Educational Setting Solution* by Reece L. Peterson and Carl R. Smith
- *Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice: Recommended Practices* by Robert B. Rutherford, Mary Magee Quinn, Peter E. Leone, Lili Garfinkle, and C. Michael Nelson
- *Integrating Technology in Program Development for Children and Youth with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders,* edited by Lynn K. Wilder and Sharon Black
- *Strategies and Procedures for Designing Proactive Interventions with a Culturally Diverse Population of Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders and Their Families/Caregivers* by Gloria D. Campbell-Whatley and Ralph Gardener, III

As series editors, we solicited members of the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders from across the country to share their thoughts on a range of critical issues regarding students with emotional or behavioral disorders. We are indebted to our colleagues who have so generously given both their time and expertise to making this mini-library possible. We trust that their efforts will contribute to your success and the success of the students with whom you work.

Lynda M. Bullock
University of North Texas

Robert A. Gable
Old Dominion University

1 Identification, Assessment, and Disproportionate Placement of Culturally Diverse Students

More than three decades ago, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) found that a positive relationship existed between teacher expectation, differential treatment, and student self-fulfilling prophecy. Later, Proctor (1984) confirmed that "low expectations are generally associated with minority group membership, low SES (socioeconomic status), male gender, nonconformity personality, physical unattractiveness, nonstandard speech patterns, and low achievement" (p. 122). Based on his assertion, critical issues that affect students from linguistically, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds and their parents in programs for persons with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) are linked to assessment and intervention. For example, these students continue to be overrepresented in special education programs, especially in programs for students with behavioral disorders (Artiles & Trent, 1994). Ford, Obiakor, and Patton (1995), Obiakor (2001), Obiakor and Schwenn (1996), and Rotatori and Obi (1999) agreed that teachers tend to make idiosyn-

cratic judgments about students' school and life successes and failures, especially when they come from different racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

With changes in demographics and predicted shifts in powers and paradigms, professionals who work with individuals with E/BD must confront issues of assessment and intervention as they explore innovative ways to maximize the academic potential of culturally diverse learners. The critical question is: If prejudicial expectations, discriminatory assessment, and inadequate instruction result in disproportionate placement, what assessment and intervention techniques will be useful for culturally diverse learners with E/BD?

In general and special education programs, culturally diverse learners are consistently at risk of misidentification, misassessment, misclassification, misplacement, and misinstruction because they behave and learn differently (Ford et al., 1995; Hilliard, 1995; Obiakor, 1994, 1995). Directly or indirectly, educators fail to respond to intraindividual and interindividual student differences, forcing the processes of identification, assessment, classification, and placement to become weighted with inappropriate assumptions, negative stereotypes, and illusory generalizations (Obiakor, 1996, 1999, 2001; Obiakor & Algozzine, 1995; Obiakor & Schwenn, 1996; Samuda & Lewis, 1992). In other words, the traditional ways general and special educators gather and disseminate information about culturally diverse learners for decision making fail to address the relationship between intraindividual and interindividual differences and disproportionate representation. Although methods of getting such information are supposed to include student interviews, parent interviews, student observations, academic records, health records, attendance records, and discipline records, educators continue to rely on approaches that have consistently created bias in labels and categories for culturally diverse learners (Midgette, 1995; Obiakor & Algozzine, 1995; Weissglass, 1998). According to Weissglass (1998):

> The beliefs that some people are better than others and that success is a matter of genes and independent of societal and familial conditions tend to perpetuate discrimination. This discrimination falls the hardest on people from lower socioeconom-

> ic classes who do not receive equal educational opportunity and on people of color who endure subtle and sometimes blatant racism that affects their learning and self-confidence. (p. 45)

Researchers and scholars decry abuses associated with classifying, labeling, and placing students because they look, behave, speak, and learn differently (Duvall, 1994; Gould, 1981; Hilliard, 1995; Obiakor, 1993, 1994, 1998; Samuda & Lewis, 1992). For many students from diverse backgrounds, the methods of behavioral assessment remain critical (Hoy & Gregg, 1994; Karr & Wright, 1995). General and special educators tend to forget that the information that applies to one student in one setting may not apply to the same student in another setting. Even when such information is accurate, it cannot be generalized to suit all students. Additionally, what works for one teacher or other professional may not work for another (Obiakor & Schwenn, 1996). Much of this pedagogical knowledge seems to be lost when we consider issues affecting learners from diverse backgrounds. There is little wonder that general and special educators continue to use a "one size fits all" technique to identify, assess, and place culturally diverse learners who bring multidimensional background experiences to school programs. Put another way, traditional labels and categories have failed to address the unique abilities of culturally diverse learners. One problem is that educators continue to place too much emphasis on intelligence scores (Obiakor, Schwenn, & Rotatori, 1999; Park, Pullis, Reilly, & Townsend, 1997).

There are numerous disadvantages to globalizing behaviors that culturally diverse students exhibit and wrongfully interpreting their capabilities. These professional misinterpretations might be internalized by these students, resulting in intractable and negative self-fulfilling behaviors (Obiakor, Algozzine, & Campbell-Whatley, 1997; Webb-Johnson, Obiakor, & Algozzine, 1995). Many of these students have difficult times in classrooms, schools, and homes where their devaluation has led to self-defeating behaviors. Some parents give up on them, they fail to get along with classmates, and teachers consistently attempt to have them reassigned to other classes or settings. For these reasons, it is essential that we establish support mechanisms and innovative assessment and intervention techniques that work with students from diverse backgrounds.

The goal should not be to label or "get rid of" culturally diverse students; it should be to provide education in rewarding environments. As DeBruyn (1984) noted:

> If we adopt a "get rid" of attitude, we violate a basic tenet of education: that each student is an individual, and that our instruction and curriculum must try to make allowances for individual differences. Regardless of our feelings, we cannot discount this tenet. That's why it is dangerous to adopt a practice that amounts to saying, "Get the uninterested, unmotivated, and ill-behaved out of the school to keep them from interfering with those who want to learn." In truth, this is an easy way out. And teaching all students is not easy. Yet, it remains our challenge. (p. 1)

It appears that culturally diverse learners are misassessed because of the failure of societal categories to respond to contemporary paradigm shifts. Recently, outrageous acts of aggression and violence have occurred in schools. When schools are viewed as "good" schools located in "good" neighborhoods where "good" parents and their "good" children live, the problem behaviors of students who attend those schools go unnoticed. Ironically, for culturally diverse students, their problem behaviors are highlighted by the national media and frequently result in disproportionate placement, suspension, or expulsion.

Identification, Assessment, and Intervention Strategies for Culturally Diverse Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

To deal with issues of identification, assessment, and intervention for culturally diverse learners, there must be a significant shift in paradigms. For example, over 250 million standardized tests are administered to students each year. Anastasi (1976) indicated that these tests compare students' results to the norms. The question arises: How feasible is this process, considering the behavioral differences among culturally diverse learners? Diagnostic, formative,

and summative evaluations are necessary to determine student achievement and program effectiveness. Diagnostic tests are given before programs are initiated, formative tests are given while programs are underway, and summative tests are given after programs are completed. These procedures must be viewed as functional processes. Since tests are only samples of behavior, assessment must include more than testing (Witt, Elliot, Kramer, & Gresham, 1994). In fact, school-based assessment of culturally diverse learners should involve consistent collecting and synthesizing of information about a particular problem. According to Witt and colleagues, assessment is:

> An ongoing process which involves a wide array of materials, techniques, and tests across a variety of time periods and situations. Teachers, parents, counselors, psychologists, speech clinicians, and even children can be involved actively in the process of assessing the strengths and weaknesses at school or home. Thus assessment, particularly for purposes of special or remedial education, is multifaceted and should be a team process whereby professionals and laypersons work cooperatively toward the solution of a problem. (p. 5)

Based on this statement, identification and assessment of learners from diverse backgrounds should not be unidimensional, nor should it be limited to the use of formalized standardized tests for these students. Gearhart and Gearhart (1990) argued that test selections have ignored societal changes and changes in children's needs. Similarly, Karr and Wright (1995) explained that:

> Although the utilization of traditional assessment is essential for individuals with problem behaviors, a broader base approach appears to be of much use in today's changing society. Educators' awareness of the need to utilize more contemporary assessment procedures calls for a more holistic approach to address the needs of our ever changing multicultural society. (p. 64)

A great amount of time has been devoted to the development of identification and assessment tools (Elksnin, Larsen, & Wallace, 1992); however, the use of these tools has raised numerous questions. For instance, how reliable and valid are these tools when applied to culturally and linguistically diverse students, especially

those who live in urban areas? How have their results been used to interpret students' behaviors? How have these interpretations informed the identification, categorization, and placement of these students? Test tools are reliable when they produce consistent results. Some of these tools have not produced consistent results for urban learners. Even when they do produce consistent results, they sometimes fail to define the construct that they purport to measure. More than a decade ago, Kauffman (1989) argued that:

> Nearly all behavioral standards and expectations, and therefore nearly all judgments regarding behavior deviance, are culture-bound; value judgments cannot be entirely culture-free. In our pluralistic society, which values multicultural elements, the central question for educators is whether they have made sufficient allowance in their judgment for behavior that is a function of a child's particular cultural heritage. (p. 212)

Establishing multicultural standards is not an easy task. Appropriate behaviors for students from culturally diverse environments should be based on two questions: (a) Whose standards? and (b) What culture? Response(s) to an issue may be appropriate in one culture and inappropriate in another. In most school contexts, what is right or wrong is based on an agreed-upon code of conduct. Park and colleagues (1997) contended that since special education for students with E/BD cannot be free of cultural biases, it should be aimed only at those students whose behaviors would be viewed as deviant by most (if not all) cultures. It is important that school personnel understand their culturally diverse students and develop the personal characteristics needed to value who these students are. They must be considerate and flexible and not assume that all persons have the necessary knowledge to assess culturally diverse students fairly. Assessment must be conducted by persons who understand how to derive proper standards to get the most reliable and valid results (Adelman & Taylor, 1993; Anastasi, 1976; Elksnin et al., 1992). Since general and special educators may develop different standards for interpreting what they see, efforts must be made through teamwork to learn about the culturally diverse learner's background and the learning and testing environment(s).

To intervene when effectively culturally diverse learners have problems, a more comprehensive holistic model must be developed. Karr and Wright (1995) confirmed that education professionals must acknowledge the following:

1. *Information Sources* (e.g., teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, children, and other pertinent school personnel).
2. *Environment (e.g., home, school, whole class, and structured activities behaviors).*
3. *Data Sources* (e.g., structured interviews, observation, behavior rating scales. Psychological test, checklist, and specialized informal/formal test).
4. *Comprehensive Responses* (e.g., conferences, program design, duration of services, follow-up services, and reassessment of program and service semi-annually). (pp. 66–67)

There is no doubt that parents, teachers, and practitioners would like to see an immediate termination of students' behaviors using a so-called magic pill. Problems arise when the wrong pill is used for the right behavior or the right pill is used for the wrong behavior, producing an *iatrogenic* effect (Dettmer, Thurston, & Dyck, 1993). Although this term is derived from the medical field, it has various educational implications for culturally diverse learners with E/BD. Iatrogenic intervention results from an iatrogenic assessment of the behaviors and capabilities of these learners.

More than a decade ago, the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD) linked problems in the assessment of culturally diverse children to shortcomings in the existing assessment procedures for emotional or behavioral disorders (CCBD, 1990). Now, just as they did then, three factors make culturally diverse learners susceptible to misdiagnosis. First, language differences may impede the students' academic and social competence. Second, teachers may have faulty perceptions and/or lowered expectations for culturally diverse students' academic and social competence. Third, culturally diverse students are often misclassified as having behavioral disorders, as evidenced by the fact that disproportionate numbers of them are referred for special education services. Based on these

problems, CCBD recommended a functional approach to assessment that would evaluate student performance within the context of the ecology of the classroom, including the adequacy of instructional variables and the interaction of teacher and learner characteristics. Analysis of this type of data should determine the adequacy of existing instructional formats and durations. Put another way, the behavioral accuracy or inaccuracy should be determined through curriculum-based assessment and analyses of work samples. As Park and colleagues (1994) remarked, "(1) Concerted efforts aimed at developing and using culturally relevant assessment instruments and practices should occur, and (2) recruitment, preparation, and retention of a more diverse and multiculturally competent population of personnel to serve students with behavioral disorders should also occur" (p. 24).

No one would question that appropriate intervention must be provided to all learners. Accordingly, to prevent iatrogenic effects, tests must be examined for their adequacy to meet culturally diverse learners' instructional needs before they are utilized (Grilliot, 1995; Obiakor, 1994; Obiakor & Algozzine, 1995; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 2000). From start to finish, assessment and intervention processes must be recognized as functional authentic processes that could increase partnerships among classroom teachers, special education teachers, school psychologists, and other service providers. Grilliot concluded that:

> Some degree of bias is inevitable in a country of such diverse cultures, but we must strive for the least-biased methods. We must be flexible and able to use a variety of instructional methods within one setting. Our common goal must be to minimize the negative consequences of labeling. The ideal classroom may never be achieved in our schools, but as inclusive classrooms become more widespread and continue to evolve, we must take the responsibility to open our minds. We must strive to maximize the potential of all students by providing appropriate assessment, intervention, and opportunities. (p. 8)

We feel strongly that the responsibility for change lies with general and special education professionals. Culturally diverse learners must be valued as persons. It is self-destructive to categorize them,

their parents, schools, and communities based on their personal idiosyncrasies, racial identities, cultural beliefs, and/or socioeconomic backgrounds. Rather, culturally diverse learners and their parents must be given the opportunity to work with schools and communities. Proctor (1984) confirmed that teachers are less apt to direct instruction to students for whom they have low expectations; are less likely to tolerate inattention on the part of such students; and are more likely to place fewer demands on them for classroom performance, homework assignments, and overall academic effort. He added that when the learning environment differs for individuals and groups within a school, differential expectations will emerge, with differential outcomes in student achievement. A logical extension is that general and special educators must be careful about becoming bound to traditional identification, assessment, and intervention tools. Educators cannot replace appropriate teacher-related behaviors with control-related behaviors meant for restricted institutions and environments (Obiakor, Karr, Utley, & Algozzine, 1998). To reduce labels and illusory conclusions, general and special educators must expect their culturally diverse students to be individuals with divergent behaviors, capabilities, and intelligences (Gardner, 1993; Rotatori & Obi, 1999). As Gardner reiterated:

> It is of utmost importance that we recognize and nurture all of the varied human intelligences, and all of the combinations of intelligences. If we recognize this, I think we will have at least a better chance of dealing appropriately with the many problems that we face in the world. If we can mobilize the spectrum of human abilities, not only will people feel better about themselves and more competent; it is even possible that they also feel more engaged and better able to join the rest of the world community in working for the broader good. Perhaps if we can mobilize the full range of human intelligences and ally them to an ethical sense, we can help to increase the likelihood of our survival on this planet, and perhaps even contribute to our thinking. (p. 12)

2

Impact of High-Stakes Testing

Testing has become an educational pastime. States and districts now regularly administer large-scale standardized assessments to students to determine their knowledge and skills. This is one part of the standards-based educational reform and accountability movement, which calls for higher standards—both content and performance—and measures of progress toward meeting the standards. The final components of standards-based reform and accountability, reporting results and imposing consequences (Newmann, King, & Rigdon, 1997) for that performance, are beginning to appear as well. At the same time that we are hearing more about so-called high-stakes testing, federal law requires that all students participate in assessments, regardless of whether they have disabilities or limited English proficiency. Viewed together, these factors trigger strong emotional reactions, especially when the students who are to be tested with high-stakes assessments come from culturally diverse backgrounds and have behavioral disorders.

This chapter has two purposes: (a) to highlight the issues that emerge when students from culturally diverse backgrounds who have E/BD must take state and district assessments and (b) to provide a firmer foundation for understanding why it is important that these students participate in these challenging assessments. In addition, we identify ways in which assessments can be improved to

ensure that the ultimate impact of high-stakes testing is positive for the educational system as a whole, including the students who must take the tests.

The Context of High-Stakes Testing and Education Reform

From the time that the governors of the 50 states and President George Bush held the Education Summit in 1989, the United States has pursued a path of education reform designed to raise educational standards and assess progress toward those standards—for *all* students. The ideas of the Summit were continued throughout the Clinton administration, as three federal education laws were enacted in support of education reform. Goals 2000 (the Educate America Act) provided money to support state and local reform efforts. Although this law was not reauthorized, in part because of political concerns, funds continued to be used by states as two other laws were reauthorized that were consistent with the tenets of education reform. These two laws—the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA, formerly called the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—carried forward the core concepts of education reform with the goal being to ensure that all students would reap the benefits of reform.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

When it was reauthorized in 1997, IDEA included new assessment provisions linked to state and district assessments and designed to promote accountability for student results on the part of educators rather than simply student access to education. With this law, Part B funds are contingent on states' ensuring that students with disabilities are included in state and district assessments, with accommodations as appropriate, and that their performance is publicly reported. To ensure that all students would be included in assessment systems, IDEA 97 also required that states develop and implement, by July 2000, alternate assessments for those students who are unable to participate in typical state and district assessments.

Finally, IDEA required that states report, with the same frequency as for students without disabilities, the number of students with disabilities participating in regular and alternate assessments and the performance of those students. These requirements that states and districts report aggregate and disaggregate results for students with disabilities reflect the belief that educators and the public need to know how well these groups of students are profiting from their educational experiences.

IASA Title I. Title I provides states and districts with significant funding to support compensatory programs. During its reauthorization in 1994, legislators made clear that this program is for *all* students, including those with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency. For its evaluation system, states and districts were no longer allowed to simply pick a pretest and posttest that they wanted to administer to students who directly received Title I services. Instead, Title I was promoting school-wide programs and the inclusion of all students. In addition, Title I required that states and districts evaluate themselves using an accountability measure of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) that included as a primary component (but not the only component) performance on state assessments. As clarification of the importance given to all students participating in the programs and the evaluation system, Title I required that states report on student performance as a whole, but also supply disaggregated reports for students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. No longer could schools hide some of their typically lowest-performing students simply by excluding them from testing.

Consequences Enacted in Response to Test Performance

In current education reforms, there is tremendous pressure for teachers and students to be held accountable for the results of instruction (Education Commission of the States, 1998a, 1998b; Erickson, Ysseldyke, Thurlow, & Elliott, 1998; Rouse, Shriner, &

Danielson, 1999). Generally, a distinction is made between holding the system (including educators and administrators) responsible and holding students themselves responsible. This is reflected in the distinction between high stakes for systems and high stakes for students.

High Stakes for Systems

Federal legislation presumed that if accountability systems are built with high standards and that schools are held accountable the performance of schools and students will improve. Challenging standards should guide the choices of assessments, curricula, and instructional practices that enable students to meet those standards. Professional development that equips teachers with the skills and knowledge to enact these practices, as well as accountability based on assessments, is intended to help motivate teachers to change (David & Shields, 1999; Elmore & Rothman, 1999). The focus of change is the educational system itself. Indeed, nearly three-fourths of the states have now ensured that there are significant consequences attached to the success of their systems in raising the performance of the students they serve (Education Commission of the States, 1999). Some of the consequences are quite significant—teachers receiving cash rewards, principals losing their jobs, schools being shut down. Thus, there is high-stakes testing in most states, but the stakes are high for the educational system itself.

High Stakes for Students

In many states and districts there are not just high stakes for the system; there are also high stakes for the students themselves. These high stakes come in two primary forms: promotion tests (i.e., students cannot move from one grade to the next until they have passed a test) and graduation tests (i.e., students cannot receive a standard diploma until they have passed a test). In 1999, 20 states had tests with high-stakes consequences for students (Guy, Shin, Lee, & Thurlow, 1999). It is likely that by 2005 there will be approximately 24 states using high-stakes testing for students.

Although a handful of states have had some kind of minimal competency test in the past, the number of states with high-stakes con-

sequences for students has more than doubled, and the tests now rarely focus on minimal skills, but on higher standards instead. There are also states in which students must pass an exam to earn some type of special certificate (e.g., the Certificate of Initial Mastery in Oregon) or higher-level diploma (e.g., the Honors Diplomas in Florida and Tennessee). In these states, students still receive the standard diploma if they do not pass the test to earn the higher-level diploma.

The push for greater student accountability followed complaints that students did not perform well on assessments simply because they were not motivated to do so (e.g., Kellaghan, Madaus, & Raczek, 1996; Renchler, 1992). Governors and legislators alike embraced high-stakes testing for students despite repeated warnings from educators and researchers about the significant negative impacts of retaining (i.e., "flunking") students (Shepard & Smith, 1989). Warnings about higher dropout rates and increased referrals to special education (Sinclair, Thurlow, Christenson, & Evelo, 1996) are attached consistently to new attempts to increase the stakes for students.

The Greatest Challenge of High-Stakes Testing: Not Knowing

Various authorities have questioned whether assessments used for eligibility and certification determinations are biased against students from diverse cultural backgrounds (see Reschly, 1997). Ysseldyke, Algozzine, and Thurlow (2000) noted in their discussion of assessment bias that bias can occur at many different points in the assessment process—from the selection of instruments to the decision-making processes during and following assessments. It is no wonder that there is concern about the potential bias in large-scale assessments. Similarly, it is understandable that there are strong opinions in the field that accountability initiatives have contributed to practices and procedures that are incompatible with the increasing multiculturalism and student diversity in schools.

With high-stakes testing focusing on higher standards and consequences of greater importance (for educators, administrators, and the system, as well as for students), significant challenges exist for all students. State after state has reported that many fewer students than expected have demonstrated proficient performance on newly implemented assessments (Olson, 2001). Similarly, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has found that students are performing below the levels expected, with most students below basic competency on all measures (Hirsch, 2001).

Performance of Students from Culturally Diverse Backgrounds

Students who are from culturally diverse backgrounds perform less well than other students on state and district assessments (cf. Johnston & Viadero, 2000; Orfield & Kornhaber, 2001; Viadero, 1998, 2000; Viadero & Johnston, 2000). These findings are consistent with the findings from the NAEP for all ethnic groups except the Asian/Pacific Islander subgroup (Donahue, Voekl, Campbell, & Mazzeo, 1999; Greenwald, Persky, Campbell, & Mazzeo, 1999; Lutkas, Weiss, Campbell, Mazzeo, & Lazer, 1999; Shaughnessy, Nelson, & Norris, 1998).

There is evidence that the gaps in performance may be changing. For example, in an analysis of the performance of African-American students over many years, Wirt and colleagues (1998) found that the performance gap between African-American students and white students has narrowed considerably since the first administrations of NAEP in the areas of reading, math, science, and writing.

Performance of Students with Disabilities

Only recently have we had any data on the performance of students with disabilities on large-scale assessments, because in the past they were systematically excluded from participation in these assessments (McGrew, Thurlow, Shriner, & Spiegel, 1992; McGrew, Thurlow, & Spiegel, 1993). Thus, we have lacked the data that we need to know about how students with disabilities—particularly

those with behavioral disorders—are performing. These data are now beginning to emerge in a few states where the performance of students with disabilities has been reported by category of disability (which is not required by IDEA) or where special studies have been conducted. Also emerging are general data (not by category of disability) indicating that significant improvements in performance are occurring for students with disabilities. For example, in the state of New York, more students passed the high-level Regents exam in 2000 than had taken the exam in any previous year (New York State Education Department, 2001).

To examine the performance of students with specific categories of disabilities, a special study was conducted in Minnesota with third- and fifth-grade students taking assessments designed to measure high standards (Walz, Thompson, Thurlow, & Spicuzza, 2000). With between 85% and 89% of students with E/BD participating, which was similar to the participation rates of other categories of disability in this state, performance levels for these students were between the second and fourth highest performing of the 11 disability category groups on which data were collected. The only groups consistently performing about the same as or higher than students with E/BD were those with speech/language disabilities, visual impairments, and autism. Students with learning disabilities and other health impairments quite consistently showed much lower levels of performance, though not higher levels of participation. Furthermore, all students demonstrated improvements in performance over time. A similar analysis of the performance of students with disabilities on the graduation tests showed that participation rates were much higher on this test (Thompson, Thurlow, & Spicuzza, 2000), with approximately 91% participating. The relative performance of students with disabilities on the graduation test was comparable to that observed on the high-stakes standards tests. Approximately 31% of students with E/BD passed the math test (compared to 24% of students with learning disabilities and students with other health impairments), and approximately 41% passed the reading test (compared to 29% of students with learning disabilities and 39% of students with other health impairments). Moreover, these levels improved from one year to the next.

Meeting the Needs of Culturally Diverse Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

It is generally assumed that the performance of students from culturally diverse backgrounds who have disabilities will mirror the performance of students from culturally diverse backgrounds who do not have disabilities. This assumption is not based on data, because no past data are available (Thurlow, Nelson, Teelucksingh, & Draper, 2001) and there is still scant information on the performance of students from culturally diverse backgrounds who have disabilities. There are many dangers to students who are excluded from large-scale assessments. Simply put, "We treasure what (and whom) we measure." When students are not included in large-scale assessments, particularly when there are high stakes for the system, they are less likely to reap the benefits of educational programs and interventions.

Participation in an assessment does not necessarily mean that the student takes the assessment in the same way as all other students. Accommodations, which are changes in assessment procedures or materials designed to enable students to show their knowledge and skills rather than their disabilities, are a critical part of access to assessments that students may need. Attention to the need for accommodations—in assessment as well as instruction—is an important part of including students with disabilities in education reform and its measures. One recent study provides some information that deserves further attention (Ysseldyke et al., 1999). In both grades 4 and 11, African-American students with disabilities were less likely to receive accommodations during testing than were European Americans with disabilities. These kinds of differences were also evident to a greater extent within some specific disability categories; that is, smaller percentages of students with E/BD received accommodations than either students with mild mental retardation or students with specific learning disabilities.

Without assessment information, it is doubtful that we would have discovered that students with behavioral disorders from culturally

diverse backgrounds might not be receiving the accommodations that they need to have true access to instruction and demonstration of their knowledge and skills. Without identifying poor performance if it exists, it is unlikely that special efforts will be made to ensure that these students have the supports and extra programs they need to reach high standards. The expression "Knowledge is power" holds true in the case of high-stakes testing. At the same time, there continues to be a need to push for more accessible assessments and for assessments that recognize the various approaches to learning that naturally characterize students (Tomlinson, 1999). Whether assessments are biased for students from culturally diverse backgrounds or students with behavioral disorders or other disabilities, there is clearly a broad need to further consider what our assessments are like for *all* students.

3

Culturally Responsive Behavior Intervention Planning Using Functional Behavioral Assessment

The purpose of school discipline is not to suppress problem behavior exhibited by students with disabilities, but rather to promote effective behavioral instruction that leads students to learn and become socially competent. The goal of special education behavior programming is not simply to control problem behavior, but to teach students proactive approaches that focus on positive and constructive problem-solving strategies to prevent and positively intervene with problem behavior. When IDEA was reauthorized, it contained a number of major changes, including the regulation of disciplinary procedures (Miller, 1999). The impetus behind the regulations was the need to direct school districts to address behavioral issues in a proactive manner. The regulations address the needs of learners with disabil-

ities whose behavior is a primary barrier in accessing the school curriculum. IDEA mandates that schools address the problem behaviors of learners with disabilities by means of functional behavioral assessments (FBA) and behavior intervention plans (BIP) that include positive behavioral supports (see Miller, 1999).

In this chapter we focus on the circumstances under which FBAs are completed, the process in conducting FBAs, and the development of BIPs as part of the learner's individualized education program (IEP) as expressed in regulation 300.520 (c)(1) of the law (Fad, Patton, & Polloway, 2000). We also describe a framework for decision making to conduct FBAs and develop BIPs that are responsive to the needs of diverse learners. There is evidence that the needs of learners with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) often are manifested in an array of inappropriate behaviors. These behaviors vary not only in type and origin, but also in intensity. The intensity often is such that the behaviors significantly interfere with these students' ability to access the school curriculum and learn. Accordingly, students with E/BD are most likely to be affected by the regulations governing the completion of FBAs and BIPs.

Assumptions and Beliefs Guiding the Use of Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans

Research provides convincing evidence that planning interventions to help learners with E/BD heal and become fully functioning individuals requires asking a series of questions that lead to a better understanding of these students' behavior. Since behavior does not occur in a vacuum, it is important for teachers to engage in assessment practices that allow them to examine student behavior in various contexts in which problems occur. Questions must address the source and context of the behaviors to provide information that can be used to plan interventions (Heiss, Gwalla-Ogisi, & Hall, 2001; Maag, 1999).

Maag (1999) argued that assessments and interventions are interconnected and reciprocal. Assessments that have traditionally been used to identify learners with disabilities and develop IEPs, such as IQ tests, achievement tests, behavior rating scales, and self-reports, often do not provide sufficient information to guide intervention planning. Many of these assessments are based on the medical model, which assumes that deficits exist in the learner with little regard for environmental variables. However, most people would agree that the concept of disability has as much to do with social and environmental functioning as it has to do with individual characteristics. Deficit-based assessment models yield little information that contributes to a better understanding of learner–environment interaction. Teachers who face the challenge of making profound decisions about children's lives must engage in practices that transcend the identification of deficits. If the purpose of special education is to help identify and reduce barriers for students to access the school curriculum, then we must pursue approaches in assessment that are more comprehensive and have direct implications for intervention planning (Heiss et al., 2001; Maag, 1999; Neville & Pankratz, 2001). Knowledge of contextual variables becomes even more significant when teachers work with students of color whose experiences in oppressive environments may significantly influence their behaviors (Heiss et al., 2001; Obiakor, 2001).

Another major assumption is that almost all behavior is purposeful and serves a function for the learner (Fad et al., 2000). This assumption is not new (Wolfgang, 1999), but recently more researchers and scholars have affirmed it. Brentro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (1990), in their nationally acclaimed book *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future,* outlined values that their research suggests are the goals of student behavior. They noted that students behave to meet the basic needs of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity, further defined as follows:

- *Belonging*—a sense of affiliation with the group, feeling the attention and affection of others, feeling accepted, being in a relationship, being a valued member of a group.

- *Mastery*—a sense of competence, being able to influence one's environments, being able to experience success.
- *Independence*—being empowered to make decisions and choices, to control one's destiny.
- *Generosity*—a sense of worth that is reflected in reaching out and giving to others, a sense of community and service.

Wolfgang (1999) advocated similar values and claimed that the goal of student misbehavior is to get attention, power, and revenge or give up in helplessness. Earlier, Borba (1989) asserted that humans are driven by the need for security, affiliation, mission, selfhood, and competence. Whichever belief system or set of assumptions one adopts, it is essential that student misbehavior be examined as goal directed. Insight about what drives and maintains a student's problem behavior helps in planning responsive interventions.

Functional Behavioral Assessments, Behavior Intervention Plans, and Conditions for Their Use

A functional behavioral assessment must be conducted when a student (a) has been suspended for the first time in a school year for more than 10 consecutive school days; (b) exhibits a pattern of problematic behaviors that interfere with the student's learning or the learning of others or disrupts instruction to the extent that the student receives a pattern of short-term suspensions totaling more that 10 days in a school year; or (c) is placed in an interim, alternative educational setting for not more that 45 days for misconduct involving weapons and drugs. The FBA must be conducted no later than 10 business days after removing the student for more than 10 cumulative days within a school year. If a student who already had an FBA and a behavior intervention plan is removed, the IEP team members may review the BIP and its implementation without a meeting but must convene if one or more of the team members believes that the BIP or its implementation requires modification (Miller, 1999).

What Is Functional Behavioral Assessment?

An FBA is a process to identify environmental factors that affect the performance of a behavior, the desired outcome of the behavior, and the function the behavior serves. The FBA also identifies the student's individual characteristics that create barriers to performing appropriate replacement behaviors (see Figure 1 on page 31). Functional behavioral assessments assist us in the identification of antecedents or conditions that predict problem behaviors and help identify desirable replacement behaviors that will yield the same outcomes for the student (Fad et al., 2000; Maag, 1999). While the IDEA regulations require FBA, they did not define the FBA process or provide specific guidelines for conducting FBAs. The regulations do, however, provide examples of what may be included in an FBA. For example, the FBA comprises a review of data (e.g., rating scales; questionnaires; direct observations; surveys; interviews of teachers, family members, and students; school environment evaluation) and the behavior intervention plan. The careful review of information by IEP team members facilitates the development of hypotheses about the function(s) of problem behaviors and the identification of desired replacement behaviors.

Steps in Conducting a Functional Behavioral Assessment

There are several models for conducting FBAs. Fad and colleagues (2000) developed a framework that has been widely field-tested in schools. According to their model, the IEP team members should address the following questions when conducting an FBA:

- *What happened?* Describe the undesirable behavior.
- *What happened before the behavior was exhibited?* Identify the triggers.
- W*hat has been happening?* Describe the patterns of the behavior.
- *What are the facts?* Present data.
- *What do you think about this problem?* Brainstorm a hypothesis about why the behavior persists.

- *What do they think?* Ask the input of the student, the student's parents, teachers, and other adults who work with the student.
- *What part does the disability play?* Keep in mind the relevance of any disability relative to the behavior.

Fad and colleagues (2000) have also identified the following stages or outcomes of an FBA:

- *Defining the behavior.* This step involves operationally defining the problem behavior to arrive at a reliable, clear description so that it can be observed. Maag (1999) proposed using the following questions to guide the process of defining the target behavior:
  - What does the problem behavior look like (e.g., talking out, verbal abuse, use of profanity, destruction of property)?
  - How is the behavior performed (i.e., topography—physical movement and use of objects)?
  - How long does the behavior last (i.e., duration)?
  - How often does it occur (i.e., frequency and rate—e.g., 3 times every hour)?
  - How damaging or destructive is the behavior (i.e., intensity—e.g., causes physical injury)?
  - Where does the behavior occur and who is typically involved (i.e., setting)?
- *Collecting data.* This involves gathering information about the child and the problem:
  - Interviewing knowledgeable adults (e.g., teachers, parents, therapists, paraprofessionals, pupil service staff, support staff, other caregivers) about occurrences of the behavior.
  - Observing the student in different settings and with different teachers (e.g., art, physical education, music, math, playground, hallway, cafeteria, other school areas).
- *Examining the environment.* This involves examining the physical environment, which may include furniture and its arrange-

ment, the number of students in the classroom space, lighting, noise levels, color, and so on. It also involves the psychological environment, which may include teacher behavior, attitude, communication style, and expectations, as well as peer relationships, attitudes, and other characteristics.

- *Interviewing the student.* This involves including the student in the assessment process and is critical to successful practice. Information that can be gathered from the student could include favorite activities, subjects, interests, and pastimes; the student's own perception about the problem; relationships to peers and adults; complaints; concerns; insights into the motivation to change; problematic times and settings; what the student perceives as predictors of problems; and ideas for intervention that can be used in the BIP.

- *Addressing any other issues.* This involves developing a hypothesis about the function and effects of context on the behavior as well as describing factors that occur before and after the target behavior is exhibited that may serve as a trigger or reinforcer for it, thus maintaining it. An ABC analysis can be conducted based on the applied behavior analysis approach. *A* refers to antecedents (i.e., identifying whatever occurs immediately before the behavior). *B* refers to the inappropriate behavior that is exhibited, and *C* refers to the consequences, or what happens immediately after the misbehavior is exhibited (i.e., what the student does and what others do). Several variables should be considered in the ABC analysis:

  - *Teacher behavior:* Teacher communication, teacher assumptions about the learner, teacher attitudes, and other characteristics or actions of teachers.

  - *Student behavior:* Excessive motor movement, physical complaints, drowsiness, negative or positive peer response, and other actions of students.

  - *Curriculum and instruction:* Task difficulty, length of task, nature of the task, frequency of tasks, and other instructional features.

- *Medical factors:* Nutrition, diet, illness, irritants/toxins, hunger, allergies, fatigue, and other physical symptoms and characteristics.
- *Environmental factors:* Seating, excessive noise, overcrowding, presence of extra adults in class, access to preferred activity, termination of preferred activity, and other classroom, school, and community characteristics.
- *Social interactions:* Peer interactions, amount of attention, choices, values, thoughts, perceptions, and other interpersonal features.

Hypothesizing About Behavioral Function: A Process to Consider

Techniques explained by Cardellichio and Fields (1997) are applicable to the FBA process. They stated that hypothetical thinking is a "powerful technique for creating new information" (p. 24). Hypothetical thinking forces us to examine and perceive issues beyond the obvious. One of the techniques Cardellichio and Fields suggested in this process is termed "reversal thinking" (p. 24). Reversal thinking approaches a problem from the final act and proceeds backward to trace the source. Since FBA is a reversal process, it should be relatively easy to problem solve from this framework. Reversal thinking involves asking questions about instruction and curriculum, such as "What could have happened to cause a student to act out?" For example, a teacher might observe a student joking loudly during quiet instructional time, enticing the whole class to burst out in laughter. In problem solving this situation using reversal thinking, the teacher could ask, "What happened to prompt this student to act like a class clown?" This would allow the teacher to examine several things. Since behavior is purposeful and is exhibited to meet needs, the teacher can use that assumption to form a hypothesis. Did the student need attention, or could the student have been trying to escape a difficult task by drawing attention away from the task? Both goals were achieved by the behavior.

Given what the teacher learns from the FBA data, he or she can generate a hypothesis statement and test it though behavioral intervention. Once the goal of the behavior is established, the teacher might identify an appropriate replacement behavior to meet the same goal (or produce the same outcome). If the child's purpose was to get attention, the teacher might teach him or her to write the joke on a card and place it in the classroom "to do" pile to be shared at a later time. If the purpose of the behavior was to avoid a difficult task, the teacher might teach the child to ask for help from a learning buddy or the teacher.

Another technique that is helpful is one that Cardellichio and Fields (1997) called "point of view analysis" (p. 24). This technique requires the teacher to consider the child and his or her history and background. The teacher examines the child's point of view about the behavior. Attention and escape were identified as possible functions of the behavior just mentioned. What else could account for the behavior? Now the teacher could ask, "How does this student perceive the behavior?" At this level of questioning the teacher should consider variables that are not so obvious, such as the child's cultural background and traditions, to explain the behavior. A final technique Cardellichio and Fields call "web analysis." They claim "events and phenomena are related in complex ways" (p. 25). In the context of testing an FBA hypothesis, teachers should explore the complexity of the relationships between a child's behavior, the functions they serve, and the desired outcomes within the environment. For a student who interrupts conversations often, the obvious hypothesis might be that the student seeks attention, power, or control. To gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between the behavior and the context in which it occurs, teachers could ask questions such as "How were the other students affected by the behavior? What did the students do? What was the outcome?" Web analysis focuses on the behavior here and now, examining what actually happened. In the previous example, the student told a joke, all the students stopped working and laughed, and the teacher stopped working and approached the student to reprimand him. By reviewing this information, the teacher can generate hypotheses

about what goals these outcomes met for the student. In this example, if the teacher knows that the student has recently joined the basketball team and the team captain is in the room, she might hypothesize that his joke is an attempt to affiliate with the captain.

What Is a Behavior Intervention Plan?

The FBA process allows one to make decisions about what to do to initiate contextual modifications (i.e., changes in the environment, changes in the curriculum, or changes in the student's behavior). A behavior intervention plan is a proactive plan to address the behavioral needs identified in the FBA. After collecting data on a student's problem behavior and formulating a tentative hypothesis about the function the student's behavior serves (see Figure 1 for a summary of the FBA hypothesis generation process), the IEP team should revise any existing BIP or design a BIP if one is not already in place. The BIP should be incorporated into the student's IEP.

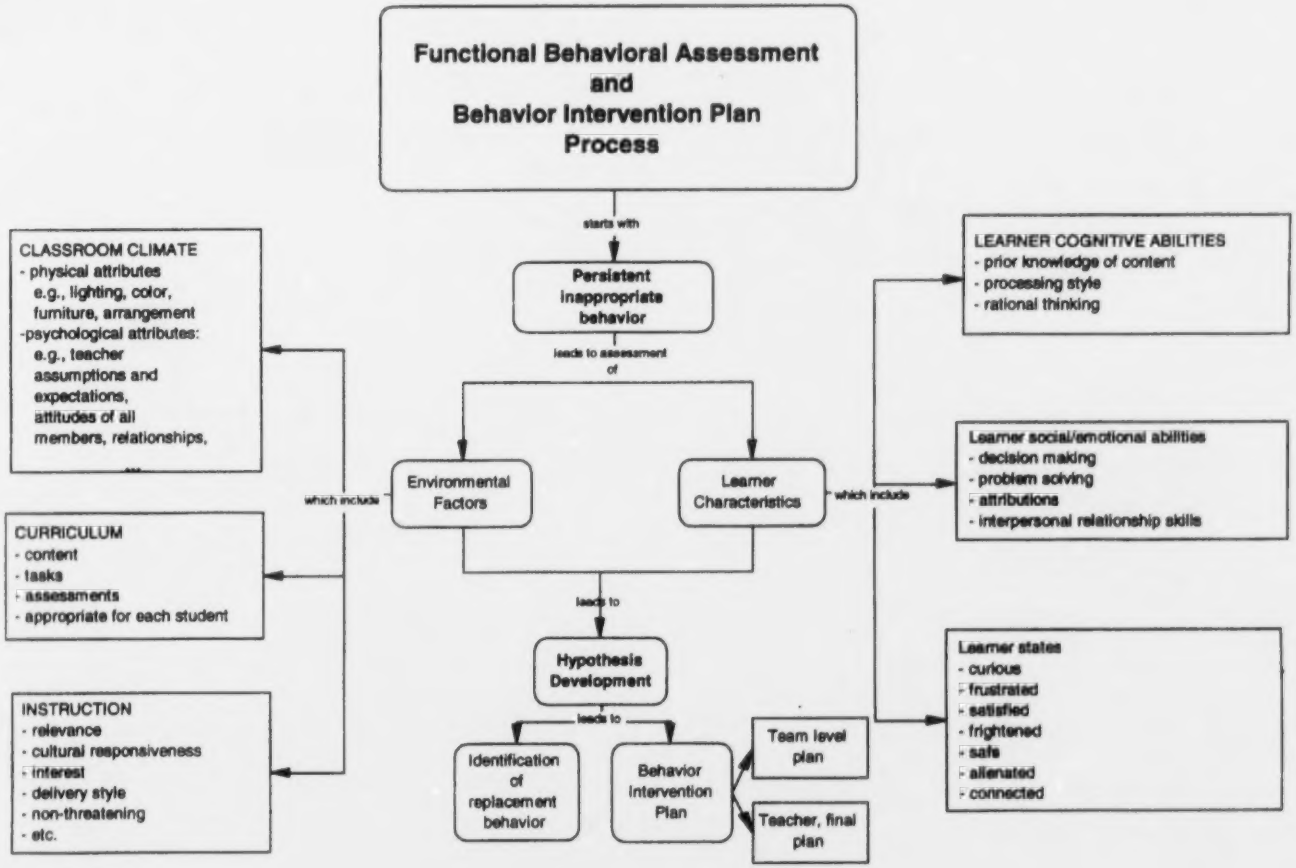
The plan should be proactive, based on an FBA, and include positive behavioral interventions and supports. This requirement responds to the common practice in schools of trying to eliminate problem behavior by punishing the student for exhibiting the behavior without any investigation of why the behavior occurred. Positive behavioral supports require an understanding of the purpose of the student's behavior so that the student can be assisted to replace the problem behavior with an acceptable one that achieves the same goals. Punitive approaches are, at best, "quick fixes" that suppress behavior temporarily but do not achieve long-term changes. The student does not learn appropriate replacement behaviors to achieve his or her goals.

Components of a Good Behavior Intervention Plan

The BIP process (see Figure 1) should include the following key features (Fad et al., 2000; Maag, 1999; O'Neill et al., 1997):

- An operational definition of the problem behavior stated so clearly that any observer can identify instances and noninstances of the behavior.

Figure 1 Summary of the FBA and BIP Process



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- Summary statements resulting from the FBA that include setting events, antecedents to the problem, the problem behavior, the consequences maintaining the behavior (ABC analysis). An example of a summary statement might be "When Toby was called names by his peers (antecedent) during a class lecture (setting event) he talked out and shouted at his peers (problem behavior), the teacher stopped instruction, walked over to him, and verbally reprimanded him (maintaining consequence)."
- Expected outcomes and goals, such as "The student learns replacement behaviors to achieve desired goals and appropriate social cues to the behavior."
- The intervention—a general approach to make the problem behaviors irrelevant, inefficient, and ineffective. This involves describing the procedures, such as setting events strategies, immediate predictor strategies, consequence strategies, and teaching strategies.
- A specific description of routines that will be provided.
- Teaching and supporting the intervention strategies.
- A monitoring and evaluation system that includes ongoing, systematic evaluations.

Professionals also find the following questions helpful in developing BIPs:

- What is the definition of the problem behavior?
- To what extent is the behavior a priority to be changed?
- Has an FBA been conducted?
- What are the results of the FBA?
- What appropriate replacement behaviors matching the function of the problem behavior could be taught?
- Has the source of reinforcement for the inappropriate behavior been identified?
- What reinforcers are effective with this student?
- What interventions are most likely to work with this student?

- How will progress be measured?
- Who will be involved in teaching the new behavior?
- How will generalization be addressed?
- What role will team members assume in the BIP?

Considerations in Selecting Teaching Strategies to Change Inappropriate Behavior

It is important that principles of good teaching be considered when implementing BIPs (see Figures 2, 3, and 4). Obiakor (2001) and Heiss and colleagues (2001) presented variables that should be considered when planning instruction for learners from diverse backgrounds. Since learners differ in experiences, interests, readiness, cognitive ability, language, culture, gender, and mode of learning, it is imperative that behavioral intervention strategies be differentiated and responsive to each individual's unique needs. It is also important to consider *how* the replacement behaviors and the strategies will be taught in order to promote self-regulation. Often the focus is only on the strategy, which is the simplest of the steps. Strategy can be thought of as a process that is goal-directed, is consciously controlled, and facilitates performance. Since most of us generally use strategies, we often take them for granted. Consider how frequently we use Post-it notes as reminders to complete tasks and how automatically we refer to our planners or organizers to manage our time and our behaviors. Students with E/BD often fail to use effective behavioral strategies to get their needs met. Similar to students with learning disabilities, students with E/BD often fail to develop and use the strategies typically used by their peers. Behavior intervention plans must be designed to teach students to select and use strategies that are appropriate in challenging situations. However, metacognitive knowledge of the strategies must also be taught concurrently with self-cueing, self-instruction, self-monitoring, and self-reinforcement. There is no "one size fits all" in the process of teaching strategies, nor is there a "quick fix" that promotes long-term learning. Teachers must select among many approaches to find one that is responsive to the way the student learns and the context within which the student functions.

Figure 2 Psychoeducational Behavior Intervention Planning Considerations

1. Describe the mismatches between the behavioral demands of the setting, interactions, instruction, knowledge, and skills, and the behavior of the learner.
2. Describe the context within which the mismatches are most pronounced.
3. Describe the expected behaviors within the settings in which the learner experiences the most disparity.
4. Describe the knowledge and skills required of the learner to perform the expected behaviors.
5. Describe instruction, modifications, enhancements, and supports that the learner requires in order to perform the expected behaviors.
6. Describe how the replacement behaviors will be taught.
7. Describe the indicators of success and what will be done to support maintenance and transfer across settings, situations, and people.
8. Describe the plans or strategies for the celebration of learning and continued motivation of the learner to own the new knowledge, skills, and behaviors.
9. *Considerations for supporting the change.* For this plan to work, teachers need to do the following:
   - Constantly review the plan and its implementation.
   - Let go of what is not working; shift gears realistically and incrementally.
   - Build teacher self-confidence through positive self-talk and positive expectations.
   - Anticipate difficult situations and proactively plan for them.
   - Identify people who will serve as a support system and communicate the kind of support needed.
   - Implement the plan persistently; stick with it.

It is critical for teachers to recognize that students are naïve about the replacement behaviors and the rationale for their use. Most youngsters do not know how to develop beyond where they are until a teacher shows them the way (Tomlinson, 1999). While it is necessary for teachers to teach strategy steps, social skills, and replace-

Figure 3 Cognitive Behavior Intervention Planning Considerations

1. Define the problem, the event, and the situation.
2. Describe what the learner thought.
3. Describe what the learner felt.
4. Describe what the learner did (i.e., actions).
5. Describe the needs the learner perceives were met and behavior payoff.
6. Describe how the behavior affected the learner.
7. Describe how the behavior affected others.
8. Describe the replacement thought.
9. Describe feelings that the student could have that do not cause problems.
10. Describe actions the learner will engage in that do not cause problems for self or others and meet the learner's needs.
11. Describe the strategies the learner will use to change his or her thinking.
12. Teach the strategies.
13. Evaluate performance.
14. Monitor progress.
15. Celebrate success.

ment behaviors, those alone are not sufficient. Teachers must also address students' lack of awareness of the larger social and emotional context of their behavior. The teacher, therefore, has to play the role of coach to help students figure out the game plan within each environment.

Intervention Approaches

John Bemis (1998) in his curriculum *Changing Behavior by Changing Thinking,* and Paula Nichols (1996) in her curriculum *Clear Thinking,* presented compelling arguments to encourage teachers to use cognitive behavioral interventions to teach students

Figure 4 Adlerian/Dreikursian Behavior Intervention Planning Considerations

1. Identify and describe the student's problem behavior.
2. Identify and describe the teacher's response to the student's behavior.
   - Does the teacher feel annoyed?
   - Does the teacher feel hurt?
   - Does the teacher feel beaten?
   - Does the teacher feel incapable?
3. Hypothesize about the student's behavior goal based on responses likely to be produced by the behavior:
   - Attention-getting behaviors often produce annoyance.
   - Power and control behaviors often produce feeling beaten.
   - Revenge behaviors often produce hurt.
   - Helpless behaviors often produce feelings of incompetence.
4. Verify by confronting the student with the hypothesized goal of his or her behavior:
   - Could it be that you want attention?
   - Is it possible that you want to boss me around or get your way?
   - Is it possible that you want to hurt others because you are hurting?
   - Do you want to be left alone?
5. Identify techniques for responding to undesirable behaviors:
   - Attention: Give "I" messages or send a secret signal to acknowledge the student.
   - Power: Exit gracefully, do not engage, set limits, acknowledge the student's power.
   - Revenge: Disengage, table the matter, use consequences.
   - Helplessness: Teach positive self-talk, focus on past success, provide success opportunities, keep a success journal.
6. Design a teaching plan:
   - Articulate objectives.
   - Articulate an action plan.
   - Select strategies.
   - Plan natural or logical consequences.
   - Implement the plan.
   - Evaluate the results.
   - Generalize.
   - Monitor and celebrate successes.

to think rationally and make wise, responsible choices and decisions. They asserted that students have to be taught the connections between the language of feelings, thinking, and action and how the brain works. It is important from their perspective to teach students the strategies they need to be self-aware, to recognize problem behavioral triggers, and to make wise choices about how to respond. Some of these cognitive interventions include teaching students about automatic thoughts, distorted thinking, errors in thinking, dysfunctional belief constructs, and irrational beliefs and habits. Techniques such as thought stopping, reframing, thought replacement, positive self-talk, and positive affirmations are just a few that can address thinking distortions. These techniques are critical to addressing behavior change proactively and positively (see Bemis, 1998; Nichols, 1996; Weber, 1997). All of these suggestions accomplish much to "school the emotional mind" (Schilling, 1996, p. 4). As Schilling asserted, the mind that thinks and the mind that feels will perform well together to enhance student's social and emotional intelligence.

Wood and Long (1991) proposed another approach to meeting the needs of learners in crisis. They explained that some learners whose behavior escalates very quickly might not respond to traditional interventions. Such learners might need to be allowed to deescalate in isolated settings, during which time a teacher could use strategies such as life space crisis intervention (see Wood & Long, 1991). Wood and Long view crisis as an opportunity to teach valuable skills at a time when students are most likely to see the problem and the relevance of the skills themselves. The goal of life space crisis intervention is to help learners gain some insights into their problem behavior, figure out their varying needs, and figure out how to meet them in acceptable ways. Another approach that is commonly used and meets the needs of some learners is applied behavior analysis (ABA). ABA is concerned with the analysis and modification of human behavior through reinforcement and punishment strategies. Techniques such as positive reinforcement, contracting, token economy systems, response cost, and planned ignoring can also be used to support the development of replacement behaviors.

Finally, it is also important for teachers to take the necessary steps to assure that the BIP and its implementation are evaluated continuously. Using approaches to developing FBAs and BIPs that are grounded in sound educational principles and practices is essential to meeting the needs of diverse students with E/BD. Behavioral intervention strategies and instructional approaches that are culturally responsive facilitate that process and further underscore the importance of going beyond traditional assessment and instructional techniques to address the individual needs of students and to highlight proactive, positive behavioral supports that empower them.

4 Parent/Teacher Partnerships in Screening and Assessment

The ethnic and racial composition of the U.S. population is changing rapidly. The increasing cultural diversity has important implications for professionals who work with families of children with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD). Teachers must not only recognize but also understand the changes in our nation's ethnic profile and their impact on the school-aged population. According to Shaw (1999), there were 70 million children in the United States in 1998, an increase of about 0.3 million from the previous year's figure. The continuous increase in racial and ethnic diversity is evident in the composition of the general population: One out of every three Americans is from an Asian-American, Hispanic, African-American, or Native-American culture (Bureau of the Census, 1997).

To build positive relationships with families, teachers must respond to changing social, economic, and cultural patterns. Factors that can negatively impact families must be considered as part of the parent/teacher partnership process because increased risk factors add to the needs of these families for outside support networks through churches, families, and friends. Professionals must acknowledge and understand these risk factors as part of the educational process for children and their families. Teaching students from culturally

and linguistically diverse backgrounds requires that schools infuse the value of diversity across curricula.

The quality of parent/professional partnerships is rooted in competent educators who are sensitive to the diverse needs of the child (Sileo & Prater, 1998) and the parents of exceptional multicultural learners (Sileo, Sileo, & Prater, 1996). Teacher preparation programs are the catalyst for making changes to parent/teacher partnerships. These programs are responsible for providing pedagogical instructional strategies at the preservice level that ensure that teachers acquire the knowledge, competencies, training, and attitudinal challenges necessary for fostering positive parent/teacher partnership interactions. Teachers-in-training (i.e., futuristic level) must be taught to initiate empowerment with culturally and linguistically diverse families so they, too, will become influential in their children's education and learning.

There are many barriers that influence the extent of parents' participation in the education of their children in school settings. Thorp (1997) indicated that families that have negative experiences within school settings are not open to effective partnership. If parents feel uncomfortable in the school environment, they may reject any opportunities made available to them by school personnel (Voltz, 1994). Factors that must be considered for effective parent/teacher partnerships include family and school cultures, attitudes, values, diversity, and training. As professionals, teachers must empower families to become influential partners in their children's education. The benefits of partnership include higher graduation rates, higher test scores, better school attendance, and higher enrollment. Perhaps most important is the responsibility for children's learning shared by the home, school, and community, which provides more opportunities for meaningful and engaged learning.

Constructing Parent/Teacher Partnerships

Partnerships give families and community members greater opportunities to explore options for school involvement, participate in a

wide range of activities, and assume key roles and responsibilities in school improvement efforts, including participation in the school's decision-making processes. If these partnerships are to succeed, they must be based on trust and respect, an exchange of information, agreement on goals and strategies, and a sharing of rights and responsibilities between all parties involved.

The role played by school administrators is vital in building the foundation for all parent/teacher partnerships. School districts can offer the appropriate professional development training, inservice sessions, workshops, focus groups, and action research on learning about family interpersonal relationships, structures, and dynamics. Administrators can brainstorm with parents, families, teachers, and staff regarding approaches to working effectively with parents. To build constructive parent/teacher partnerships:

1. Parents and teachers should develop a knowledge base regarding the school families in the community.
2. Partnership teams should be developed to meet monthly to study school, family, and community relationships.
3. Focus groups should be developed to discuss various problems relating to families and their children.
4. A resource library and Web site for the school and community should be developed.
5. Parent/teacher partnership listserv should be developed to facilitate effective communication and information dissemination.
6. Parent/teacher teams should conduct needs assessments of various families.
7. A Parent/Teacher Partnership Awareness Day should be developed around relevant issues within the community.
8. Parents and families should offer workshops on school-related issues.
9. A mailbox for comments and suggestions should be made available to improve family involvement within the school system.

10. Community hubs should be created for learning and technology-enhanced partnerships.

Effective partnerships differ from community to community, and the most appropriate strategies in constructing this empowering relationship depend on local interests, needs, wants, and resources. For instance, goals and objectives, responsibilities, a timeline for actions, and evaluation processes must be clear. Schools must be at the forefront in forging partnerships that work. Specifically, schools must:

1. Consider the type of language spoken in the home to enhance positive communication between the parent and teacher.
2. Develop and provide families with information on the types of services available in the community.
3. Help parents become strong decision makers in advocating for their children.
4. Provide ample opportunities for parents and families to assist in school programs.
5. Provide a means for the infusion of technology from the curricula to the home and thereby provide a mechanism for behavioral support.

Recent advances in behavioral support suggest that technology is an effective behavioral support and an equalizer in the education of students with disabilities, including those with E/BD (Enwefa & Enwefa, in press). Technology holds the potential to impact the capability of educators, parents, and community professionals, including clinicians, to support students with E/BD. Technology can foster and enhance the teaching of new socially appropriate skills that can become an integral part of behavioral support programming. The range of procedures used for behavioral supports must be expansive to result in a decrease in problem behavior and a substantive change in how these students learn.

Parent/Teacher Partnerships in Screening and Assessment

Screening and assessment processes offer the initial point of contact for partnerships between teachers and parents of students with E/BD. The identification of concerns regarding children's behavioral disorders is most appropriately in the domain of the parent. In most cases, student referral for screening and assessment for behavioral disorders stems from expression of parental concerns, even when other professionals make the actual referral. Practices that foster and place parents as equal partners in the screening and assessment process, rather than as recipients of professional decisions, are more effective in building trust and communication between parents and teachers. For example, parental consent is obtained prior to screening and assessment of children. Also, parents provide written information regarding their concerns and attend meetings and conferences on issues relating to the screening and assessment process. These practices are routinely used to seek relevant information from parents about their children's behavior problems—information that can be used to plan a meaningful screening and assessment process. In most cases parents provide the requested information to teachers, but they do not always hear the results and/or application of that information. Teacher contacts with parents regarding screening and assessment need not be extensive. A brief, focused interview can communicate to parents the teachers' respect for and reliance upon the information they provided. The opportunity to play an important role in initial meetings is critical for parents to convey information to teachers in the following areas:

1. Parental definitions of the child's apparent behavior problems.
2. Parental perception of the child's development of the behavior problems.
3. Parental report of the child's health history and efforts to date for addressing the behavior problems.

4. Parental preferences for information and future contacts and involvement in the child's screening and assessment results and program planning.
5. Parent and child/family relationships at home and primary caregivers who spend the most time with the child.

The goal of screening is to identify children who may have behavior problems that place them at risk for social and/or academic problems. Tools typically used for screening include observations, parent reports, interviews, checklists, and anecdotal records. The actual screening process helps to determine whether a need exists for further assessment. To formulate a diagnosis of E/BD, the professional must be willing to provide an informal and formal procedure for collecting information from the child and family. The first step is to determine the concerns of caregivers, teachers, and other significant adults involved in the child's quality of life. Then, professionals gather descriptive information about the child's behaviors, strengths, weaknesses, academics, social life, and communication ability, all of which is vital to determining the type and intensity of the intervention. Both formal and informal assessment procedures are useful. Formal procedures are more structured and often include commercially available tests. Informal procedures rely on more naturalistic standardized procedures that involve semistructured interviews with parents, teachers, other family members, and also the child, when applicable.

Parent Resources for Enhancing Parent/Teacher Partnerships

Schools must make every attempt to work with parents as equal partners. As a result, parents should be made aware of available resources. The following list highlights some of these resources.

Beach Center on Families and Disability
3111 Haworth Hall
The University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045-7516
www.lsi.ukans.edu/beach/beachhp.htm

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice
American Institutes for Research
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, DC 20007
(888) 457-1551 (toll free)
(202) 944-5400
www.air-dc.org/cecp/cecp.html

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(401) 516-8800
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm.

Communities in Schools
1199 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 519-8999
http://www.cisnet.org

Council for Exceptional Children
1110 North Glebe Road, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201
(888) 232-7733
www.cec.sped.org

Exceptional Parent
P. O. Box 3000
Department EP
Denville, NJ 07834
(800) 562-1973
www.eparent.com

Family Support America
20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 338-0900
http://www.familysupportamerica.org/content/home.htm

National Association of Partners in Education (NAPE)
901 North Pitt Street, Suite 320
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-4880
http://www.napehq.org

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)
1201 16th Street N.W., Box 29
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-8405
http://www.ncpie.org

National Network of Partnership Schools
Johns Hopkins University
3003 North Charles Street, Suite 200
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 516-8818
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000

National Parent Network on Disabilities
127 King Street, Suite 305
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-6763

National Parent to Parent Support and Information System
P.O. Box 907
Blue Ridge, GA 30513
(800) 651-1151

National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
330 North Wabash Avenue, Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 670-6782
http://www.pta.org/index.stm

Parents as Teachers National Center
10176 Corporate Square Drive, Suite 230
St. Louis, MO 63132
(314) 432-4330
http://www.patnc.org

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
(formerly Family Involvement Partnership for Learning)
600 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202
http://www.pfie.ed.gov/

PEAK Parent Center
6055 Lehman Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80910
(719) 531-9400

Project Success
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
1120 East Diehl Road, Suite 200
Naperville, IL 60563-1486
http://www.ncrel.org/projectsuccess

Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers
4826 Chicago Avenue, S.
Minneapolis, MN 55417
(888) 248-0822
www.taalliance.org

5 Interconnecting Assessments and Interventions

The most important decisions made by teachers are those that help to determine what to teach and how to teach it. Of course, teachers also are asked to participate in referral, classification, and placement decisions about successful students and those having problems in school. During and after instruction, teachers evaluate the progress of their students and the overall effectiveness of what they have done. Assessment is the process of collecting information and making decisions about individuals or groups of people. Concerns related to making eligibility decisions and finding ways to improve instruction are central to assessment practices for culturally diverse students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) (Obiakor & Schwenn, 1996).

Making Eligibility Decisions

The process of identifying children and youths who qualify for services for students E/BD occurs in three stages: screening, prereferral, and certification. The purpose of screening is to rule out students who definitely are not eligible for services and identify those who are suspected of needing additional services so that prereferral efforts can be initiated. In the second stage of the identification process, students suspected of needing specialized interventions

receive some curricular modifications in their general education classrooms during prereferral activities. The effect of these modifications on the students' performance is documented. Students who are suspected of having emotional or behavioral problems but who respond to alterations in classroom practices require and receive different subsequent assessments than those for whom the teacher's efforts are ineffective or insufficient. When prereferral interventions work, subsequent assessment centers on improving instruction and continuing classroom progress. When prereferral interventions are ineffective in reducing classroom problems, subsequent assessment centers on certification. The purpose of assessment for certification is to determine, through a more intensive set of procedures, that a student does indeed qualify for specialized services. This evaluation may result in the student's being labeled as having E/BD.

A review of recent literature on the education of students from diverse backgrounds who have E/BD illustrates seven practices commonly used in one or all three stages of the identification process that should be examined carefully before determining eligibility. These include the following:

1. Using administrative definitions for decision making.
2. Applying noneducational models.
3. Concentrating only on behavior for assessment purposes.
4. Relying on generic information.
5. Ignoring the impact of labels on decision makers.
6. Implementing unstructured identification programs.
7. Using school psychologists inappropriately.

In view of the concerns about so many current practices, it is not difficult to understand why there are such significant discrepancies in prevalence figures for students with E/BD and why so many children and youths go unidentified. For these reasons, steps need to be taken to alleviate the myriad problems related to current classification practices.

Improving Instruction and Intervention

During the mid-1980s, curriculum-based assessment reemerged as a viable means of obtaining frequent, direct measurement of students' performance using their everyday curriculum materials. The concept has been referred to in the professional literature as *curriculum-based assessment, curriculum-based evaluation,* and *curriculum-based measurement.* Regardless of which term is used, this approach focuses on testing students on material on which they have been instructed. The assumption is that the testing results will be more accurate and useful when a student's performance is measured using the curriculum that is a part of the student's daily instruction.

When students with E/BD underachieve, it is often presumed that emotional problems prevent them from performing at full capacity. Indeed, a major identifying characteristic of emotional disturbance is an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors. In that mounting evidence suggests that learning and behavior problems go hand in hand, curriculum-based assessment represents a powerful tool for improving interventions planned and implemented for students with E/BD.

Other professionals suggest that educators adopt a so-called health-oriented model rather than continue to use a "disease-oriented" approach in identifying and treating students with E/BD. Three crucial processes are specified for setting up a health-oriented model of educational assessment:

1. Develop criteria of educational success.
2. Develop measures of progress toward criteria.
3. Intervene and monitor progress toward criteria.

The concept is driven by practices related to functional assessment—a part of criterion-based instruction, intervention, and integration that includes the stages described in the following paragraphs.

Identifying Critical Dimensions

There often are significant differences between general and special education. Expectations vary across educational environments. Information on differing expectations can be collected by means of interviews or checklists completed by both sending and receiving teachers. The target student (as well as classmates) should be observed in general and special education settings to further assess setting-specific behavior. Behavioral inventories or rating scales sometimes are used to collect information about teacher tolerance across settings and to identify what are considered to be survival skills in the various instructional settings. In these ways, student behaviors deemed essential for classroom success are identified.

Identifying Criterion Levels

Once acceptable behaviors are identified, observable and measurable behaviors should be specified. Criterion levels should be established based upon interviews with key stakeholders and direct observation. Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds often come to school with expectations that conflict with those of their teachers and peers. Clear standards help all students make transitions from home and community environments to classrooms and schools.

Developing Measures of Criteria

Decisions need to be made regarding ongoing data collection including the most critical dimensions of behavior (e.g., frequency, duration), how often measurement should occur, and who will collect the data. A useful assessment tool in making decisions about students with E/BD from diverse backgrounds is a portfolio that contains measures of behavior and adaptive functioning, anecdotal records of critical incidents, behavior checklists, academic performance indicators, and evidence of important cultural and linguistic characteristics.

Intervening and Monitoring Student Progress

Monitoring of student progress should occur in both special and general education classrooms. Depending on the expectations of general educators, support may need to be given to the teachers as

part of the intervention plan. Attention should be given to systematically promoting the generalization of critical skills from one educational setting to another. An important part of generalization instruction is the introduction of common stimuli and reinforcers across settings.

Assessing Culturally Diverse Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders: Connecting the Edges

Assessment is a multifaceted activity, and assessment data are gathered for several reasons. Teachers collect information about students to identify student strengths or weaknesses that require attention. When assessment information is used to make screening or referral decisions, global measurement of student strengths and weaknesses may be sufficient. At this level of decision making, teachers generally are interested in sorting individuals, so that broad descriptive indicators of success or failure on general measures are appropriate. For example, when screening students for vision problems, obtaining performance on six or seven recognition-type items usually is sufficient. Similarly, broad indicators of developmental milestones (e.g., age for walking, talking, and toilet training) may be enough to make judgments about the need for further assessment. When screening achievement, one might be satisfied with performance on a dozen arithmetic items measuring addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division skills, since the purpose is to screen and refer students in need of more intensive assessment of the targeted information.

If a student is bilingual, language proficiency is an important factor in screening and referral decisions. If the student is proficient in the use of both languages, there is less reason to be concerned about the relationship between behavior problems and language competence. If the student is not proficient in both languages, the potential is greater for related problems (cf. Obiakor & Schwenn, 1996). For these students, parental involvement is particularly helpful in determining home and community variables that should be consid-

ered. In that cultural implications should also be incorporated into the decision-making process, someone familiar with the student's cultural and linguistic background should be a member of the team.

Teachers sometimes contribute to decisions that result in the placement or classification of students into groups. Because these decisions are made with reference to predetermined criteria, the assessment data must be more precise and technically adequate than that used to make screening decisions. For example, students are classified with emotional disturbance if their scores on accepted tests meet eligibility criteria. Since this decision is for the most part terminal (i.e., further assessment is not needed), it is essential that teams base decisions on technically adequate and precise information collected by various means and by various individuals.

To make sound decisions about appropriate placement and classification for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, assessment procedures must be comprehensive, valid, and reliable (cf. Obiakor & Schwenn, 1996). Although progress has been made in eliminating bias in assessment instruments and procedures, problems still exist. Continuing care must be taken when a student speaks a language other than English in the home and/or when cultural imperatives define expectations that conflict with those of other students. The limited number of tests available in native languages and the lack of assessment personnel who are adequately prepared to provide native language assessments exacerbate an already challenging situation. While numerous solutions (e.g., culture-free tests, culture-specific tests, pluralistic assessments, test modifications) have been tried to create tests that are fair to all children, few represent strong alternatives in contemporary practice (cf. Obiakor & Schwenn, 1996).

Teachers also make decisions regarding student classroom progress that are often based on the effectiveness of a particular intervention or their overall instructional program. Teachers use the results of tests, observations, and interviews when evaluating student progress and, in turn, program effectiveness. They make these decisions based on student response to a particular intervention compared to performance during baseline, no-intervention periods of

time. Although such "treatment and control" conditions are ideal when conducting classroom evaluations, not all teachers have been adequately prepared to apply such strategies.

Determining the progress of students with E/BD who are from diverse backgrounds presents essentially the same problems as other aspects of the decision-making process. Use of languages other than English; test bias; limited linguistic and cultural experiences of teachers, psychologists, administrators, and others completing progress evaluations; fairness and usefulness of measures; and cultural bias are among the multitude of factors that influence student evaluations. While there are no simple solutions, the first step is for educators to recognize the need for change.

The most important assessment decisions that teachers make are those that focus on instructional planning. Generally, the assessment information used to make screening/referral, classification/placement, and evaluation decisions is not very useful for making instructional decisions. For example, two students may receive the same overall score on an achievement test but demonstrate very different patterns of performance on the subsets of items within the test. Similarly, two students may receive the same score on an achievement subtest but demonstrate very different performance on the items that make up the subtest. Accordingly, curriculum-based tests, repeated classroom observations, and semistructured student interviews can provide more useful information for instructional planning decisions.

Conclusion

As part of his closing keynote address at a recent conference on behavioral disorders, Nicholas Long shared a videotape with the audience. In response to a teacher request that he complete a simple one-page worksheet, a student produced several minutes of loud, abusive verbal defiance. The response from the audience of practicing professionals was to laugh and joke as evidence that they recognized one of their own. There was a sense of excitement in the challenge presented by the student, and their response was evi-

dence of a comradeship and colleagueship shared by "those in the know." It is easy to imagine how other groups might have responded to the same vignette. For example, many general teachers might have seen it as clear evidence of the need for special education and related services, while teachers of students with learning disabilities might have seen it as affirmation of why they prefer teaching less behaviorally challenging students.

It is not difficult to recognize the reactions of administrators, teachers, and peers to students who speak languages other than English or who embrace cultural hopes and dreams that are different from those of their peers. The experience of being called names and mistreated because of where your parents come from or the perception others have of your heritage is not new. Many moved to the "land of opportunity," to "the other side of the tracks," to "the better part of town," to "a good school" to overcome criticism, discrimination, and mistreatment and to build a better life for themselves and their children. They hoped to reclaim the dignity to which they were entitled as citizens of a country where dreams and ideals of individualism, equal opportunity, nationalism, and success prevail. Too often, it doesn't happen that way. Today, diversity remains a source of disparaging remarks, continuing intolerance, and disenfranchising treatment—even on the right side of the tracks, even on the right side of town, even in the good schools.

Dealing with diversity is certainly not a new challenge. Multiple voices have been part of the country's educational system for a long time. For example, in the 1850s, over half of New York City's residents were immigrants. Administrators and teachers in every period of educational history have had to think about both the challenge and the certainty of dealing with students from different cultures in schools. Around the turn of the century, compulsory attendance laws forced children from all ranges of society, not just the privileged, to go to school. About that time, special education programs cropped up in large cities to address the growing need for services for "exceptional children," many of whom came from rich, albeit nonmajority cultures. Today, American public schools serve a more diverse population than ever before in history. Race and ethnicity, social class,

gender, national origin, native language, sexual orientation, and disability contribute to the rich and diverse cultures that children bring to school. Rather than disparaging, disrespecting, and disputing the value of individual cultural, linguistic, and other differences and using them as bases for discrimination and different treatment, the challenge is to enlarge and enrich what schools can do to promote educational experiences that serve diverse students and their families well.

Finally, it is imperative that general and special educators and other service providers understand that:

- Diverse student experiences belong in the classroom and enrich what is going on there.
- What a student is called, where he or she is placed, and how he or she is taught speak volumes about how much we value that student.
- Perceptions affect assessment and instruction.
- Lack of language should never be misconstrued as lack of intelligence.
- A common goal of teachers and professionals must be to minimize the negative consequences of testing.
- Behaviors (good and bad) of teachers have far-reaching consequences.
- Learning environments should be manipulated to meet the needs of all students.
- Good teaching is the engine behind good schools.

In conclusion, good schools are defined by how they address student diversity. If this vision is embraced, misidentification, discrimination, and mistreatment will be reduced and the benefits of having a "good school," or even a "dream school" will be realized by *all* learners, *all* teachers, *all* parents, and *all* communities. It is toward this lofty goal that we must direct our efforts with regard to both research and practice.

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About the Authors

Bob Algozzine, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Educational Administration, Research, and Technology
University of North Carolina–Charlotte
Charlotte, North Carolina

Regina Enwefa, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Communicative Disorders
Jackson State University
Jackson, Mississippi

Stephen Enwefa, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Communicative Disorders
Jackson State University
Jackson, Mississippi

Nomsa Gwalla-Ogisi, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Special Education
University of Wisconsin–Whitewater
Whitewater, Wisconsin

Angela S. McIntosh, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education
San Diego State University
San Diego, California

Festus E. Obiakor, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Exceptional Education
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Martha L. Thurlow, Ph.D.
Director, National Center on Educational Outcomes
University of Minnesota–Minneapolis
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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